

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PQ

SUBJ: REPLY TO PANAMANIAN NOTE ON FORT CLAYTON INCIDENT

REF: PANAMA 2893

1. PROPOSED REPLY TO GOP NOTE CONCERNING INCIDENT AT FORT CLAYTON IS TRANSMITTED HERewith FOR DEPARTMENT'S REVIEW AND APPROVAL. BEGIN QUOTE

EXCELLENCY: I HAVE THE HONOR TO REFER TO NOTE NO. DREU-120/925 DATED MAY 15, 1975 FROM VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS CARLOS OZORES REGARDING AN INCIDENT THAT OCCURRED AT FORT CLAYTON IN THE CANAL ZONE ON MAY 10 INVOLVING MEMBERS OF THE PANAMANIAN NATIONAL GUARD AND UNITED STATES MILITARY POLICE.

2. I HAVE RECEIVED A COMPLETE REPORT ON THE INCIDENT FROM THE UNITED STATES MILITARY AUTHORITIES WHICH PROVIDES ADDITIONAL DETAILS CONCERNING THE EVENTS. ACCORDING TO THIS REPORT PRIVATES CRISTINO JARAMILLO AND JOSE TEJADA, OF THE NATIONAL GUARD WERE STOPPED AT THE FORT CLAYTON MAIN GATE AT ABOUT 1110 HOURS. THE SENTRY ON DUTY NOTICED THAT THE NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIERS WERE ARMED AND, IN SPANISH, INFORMED THEM THAT THEY COULD NOT ENTER THE MILITARY INSTALLATION BEARING ARMS. THE DRIVER OF THE NATIONAL

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GUARD VEHICLE, JARAMILLO, INSISTED SEVERAL TIMES UPON

ENTERING THE INSTALLATION AND EACH TIME WAS TOLD HE COULD NOT ENTER. FINALLY, HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD AND THE SENTRY THEN TOLD HIM HE COULD MAKE A "U" TURN AROUND THE GATE ISLAND THEN DEPART THE INSTALLATION.THEREUPON, JARAMILLO PROCEEDED FORWARD BUT, INSTEAD OF TURNING, CONTINUED INTO FORT CLAYTON. THE SENTRY INFORMED THE MILITARY POLICE OFFICE BY RADIO AND A MILITARY POLICE PATROL CAR WAS SENT TO STOP THE NATIONAL GUARD VEHICLE; HOWEVER, THE LATTER DID NOT STOP WHEN THE MILITARY POLICE (MP) FLASHED A RED LIGHT. THE MP VEHICLE THEN DROVE IN FRONT OF THE NATIONAL GUARD VEHICLE TO STOP IT.

3.THE MILITARY POLICE THEN ASKED THE NATIONAL GUARDSMEN TO LEAVE THE INSTALLATION BUT JARAMILLO AGAIN REFUSED TO DO SO. AT THIS POINT A MILITARY POLICE OFFICER ARRIVED WITH A SPANISH SPEAKING MILITARY POLICEMAN WHO REQUESTED SEVERAL TIMES THAT THEY DEPART FORT CLAYTON. JARAMILLO REFUSED TO LEAVE AND THE MILITARY POLICE OFFICER THEN ADVISED THE NATIONAL GUARDSMEN THAT IF THEY DID NOT DEPART THEY WOULD BE APPREHENDED AND THEIR WEAPONS TAKEN FROM THEM. JARAMILLO CONTINUED TO REFUSE TO LEAVE. THEREUPON, THE OFFICER ORDERED THE THREE MILITARY POLICEMEN TO DRAW THEIR WEAPONS AND HAD THE SPANISH-SPEAKING MILITARY POLICEMAN ADVISE THE NATIONAL GUARDSMEN THAT THEY WERE UNDER APPREHENSION. THEIR WEAPONS WERE TAKEN AND THEY WERE ADVISED -- AS ARE ALL PERSONS ARRESTED BY UNITED STATES POLICE -- OF THEIR RIGHTS. LT. COL. PEDRO AYALA ARRIVED ON THE SCENE AT APPROXIMATELY 1135. HE APOLOGIZED FOR THE ACTIONS OF JARAMILLO AND TEJADA AND REQUESTED CUSTODY OF THE TWO MEN. HIS REQUEST WAS IMMEDIATELY GRANTED AND THE MEN, THEIR WEAPONS AND VEHICLE WERE RELEASED TO HIM. A COPY OF THE MILITARY POLICE REPORT ON THE INCIDENT WAS GIVEN TO LT. COL. MANUEL NORIEGA, G-2 OF THE NATIONAL GUARD GENERAL STAFF ON THE SAME DAY IT OCCURRED.

4. YOUR EXCELLENCY WILL OBSERVE THAT, CONTRARY TO THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE VICE MINISTER'S NOTE, THE TWO NATIONAL GUARDSMEN WERE NOT APPREHENDED AT THE GATE. MOREOVER, THEY REPEATEDLY WERE GIVEN OPPORTUNITY TO LEAVE THE MILITARY INSTALLATION VOLUNTARILY BUT REFUSED TO DO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SO.

5. I AGREE THAT AUTHORITIES OF BOTH OF OUR GOVERNMENTS SHOULD DO THEIR UTMOST TO AVOID UNPLEASANT INCIDENTS SUCH AS THIS WHICH COULD IN ANY WAY ADVERSELY AFFECT THE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES OR THE CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS WHICH ARE CURRENTLY BEING CONDUCTED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS. THIS INCIDENT

COULD NOT HAVE OCCURRED HAD THE NATIONAL GUARDSMEN  
NOT SOUGHT ENTRY INTO A UNITED STATES MILITARY  
INSTALLATION BEARING ARMS, CONTRARY TO EXISTING AGREE-  
MENTS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, AND HAD NOT REPEATEDLY  
REFUSED TO LEAVE AS REQUESTED. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT  
UNITED STATES MILITARY AUTHORITIES DID NOT HAVE ANY  
INTENTION OF CREATING AN INCIDENT WHICH COULD ENDANGER  
THE COURSE OF THE CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS.

ACCEPT, EXCELLENCY, THE RENEWED ASSURANCES OF MY  
HIGHEST CONSIDERATION. END QUOTE.

JORDEN

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